

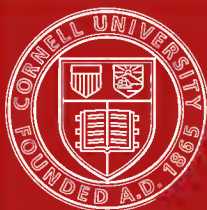
PR  
427  
H32



PR  
427  
H32

Cornell University Library

A9471



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.



REPRINT  
FROM THE  
TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF OHIO COLLEGES.

---

1889.



## EUPHUISM.

---

BY J. M. HART, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI.

---

The following paper is offered, not as an original contribution to knowledge, but as an attempt to summarize the investigations of others and make them available for the general reader. The writings chiefly followed are :

1. Landmann, *der Euphuismus, sein Wesen, seine Quelle, seine Geschichte*. Giessen, 1881. (Doctoral Dissertation.)

2. Breymann, *Engl. Studien* v., 409-421. (A searching review of No. 1.)

3. Schwan, *Engl. Studien* vi., 94-111. (A review of Landmann's paper in the Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society, 1880-1882.)

4. Landmann, *Euphuus, the Anatomy of Wit*, by John Lyly. Edited with Intro. and Notes. Heilbronn, 1887.

---

*Guevarism*.—It was the fashion until quite recently to apply the terms Euphuism and Euphuistic indiscriminately to every vice or extravagance of style, whether in prose or in verse, from the time of Elizabeth to the so-called Augustan period of Queen Anne, or even to the Victorian period. But since the publication of Landmann's Dissertation in 1881, sounder views have obtained. Step by step the field of Euphuism has been narrowed: *a*, to the time of Elizabeth; *b*, to the period from 1560-1590; *c*, to prose in distinction from poetry; *d*, to one peculiar and sharply defined variety of rhetorical and unimaginative prose.

From the crude beginnings under Wyatt and Surrey (Henry VIII.) to the finished productions of Shakespeare

(last years of Elizabeth and first years of James), English literature was emphatically in a nascent state. Hence, like other nascent organisms, it was easily swayed by influences from without. These influences were numerous, and the study of them has not yet yielded thoroughly satisfactory results at all points. But in the matter of Euphuism, at least, we stand now upon solid ground.

In the days of Charles V. and Philip II. Spain was at the summit of its greatness. It was, indeed, the world-empire. Hence it would be only natural for Spanish literature to exert an influence somewhat akin to that exerted by Spanish armies and navies. In the year 1529 the Spanish writer Antonio de Guevara published a book, entitled *Marcus Aurelius, with the Clock of Princes*. This book was half romance, half philosophic dissertation upon the training and life of an ideal ruler. It was based in good part upon the then comparatively unknown but now very well known *Meditations of the great Roman emperor*. It was written, the author himself informs us, in "lofty style," *alto estilo*. Guevara, impressed with the greatness of such Latin authors as Cicero, conceived the idea of rivalling them, by inventing a style in which rhetorical finish should be achieved by using lavishly the well known figures of pointed antithesis and parisonic balanced clauses, in connection with a general climactic structure of the sentence or period, the emphatic or antithetic words being marked by rhyme or by consonance. The book became immediately popular, partly by virtue of its subject, partly through its novelty of style. It passed through several editions, and was translated into many languages, even into Latin. Subsequently Guevara wrote other books in a like style, and these were also translated.

Guevara's *Marcus Aurelius* was given to the English public first in 1534, in a translation by Lord Berners. Its popularity is evinced by the circumstance that nine editions of this translation were printed between 1534 and 1560, and five more between 1560 and 1588. In 1557 appeared a new translation, by Sir Thomas North, based upon an augmented



version of Guevara's work. North's translation, like that by Berners, ran through numerous editions. Guevara's other writings in *alto estilo* were englished by Sir Francis Bryan, Tymme, Fenton, Savage, and Hellowes. North translated, in part, at least, directly from the Spanish. As to the translations by Berners, Bryan and the others, it is not yet clearly determined whether they were made directly from the Spanish, or only at second-hand from French renderings.

In this way *alto estilo*, or Guevarism as we may call it, was introduced into England, exciting the admiration of many English scholars of note, and arousing some of them to imitation. Among such imitators we may mention Roger Ascham, George Pettie, Lyly (in whom Guevarism reached its climax), and Lyly's followers, viz.: Robert Greene (in his prose stories), Stephen Gosson, Barnaby Rich, Thomas Nash, and Thomas Lodge. Subsequently Nash and Lodge discarded the fashion and joined Gabriel Harvey and Sidney in ridiculing it.

The following extract from Guevara's Spanish and North's translation will sufficiently illustrate the style :

"No ay oy generoso Senor ni delicada Senora, que antes no suffriesse una pedrada en la cabeza que no una cuchilada en la fama ; porque la herida de la cabeza en un mes se la dara sana, mas la mazilla de la fama no saldra en toda su vida."

North's rendering is quite literal :

"There is not at this daye so greate or noble a Lorde, nor Ladye so delicate, but had rather suffer a blow on the head with a stone than a blot on their good name with an evil tongue. For the wounde of the heade in a moneth or two maye well be healed ; but the blemmishe of their good name during life will never be removed."

The reader will observe the "balancing" of *generoso*, *delicada* ; *senor*, *senora* ; *pedrada*, *cuchilada* : *cabeza*, *fama* ; *herida*, *mazilla*. In North : *lorde*, *lady* ; *blow*, *blot* ; *head*, *name* ; *stone*, *tongue* ; *wounde*, *blemmishe* ; *healed*, *removed*.

Also, in the Spanish, *pedrada* and *cuchilada* rhyme; the corresponding English words *blow*, *blot*, alliterate.

The following sentence from Guevara will show his knack of combining parisonic antithesis with rhyme and word-play:

"Ellos trabajando de las servir; y ellas no rehusando de ser vistas," i. e.: They (the cavaliers) striving to serve them (the dames); and they (the dames) not refusing to be seen. The balancing of *trabajando* and *rehusando* is strictly parisonic; the word-play (almost a pun) upon *servir* and *ser vistas* is untranslatable.

*Italianism, so-called.\**—Italian writers (chiefly poets) of the 16th century, actuated by a spirit not unlike that of Guevara, strove—as they fondly believed—to make their style nobler by making it more intense. Their intensity, not checked by sound taste, ran into extravagance. They luxuriated in figurative language, in tropes and similes, the farther-fetched the better, in contradictions in terms (paradox), and in high-sounding boasts. Their English translators and imitators reproduced and even exaggerated these faults. And in England certainly, if not in Italy itself, the mannerism spread from poetry to prose. Instead of attempting to define Italianism in England,—it is too vague and too composite to be strictly definable,—we may characterize it as the use (and abuse) of far-fetched similes, comparisons and ideas (technically "conceits," from the Italian *concetti*), the coinage of new words and phrases, the trick of prefixing to nouns an alliterating adjective (e. g., "trickling tears," "sobbing sighs," "a doubtful, dying, doleful Dame"), the resort to euphemism (the substitution of long and elegant words and phrases for short, homely ones), the exchange of flowery compliments, and bombast in general. The alliteration of noun and adject-

---

\* Schwan is responsible for this term and most of the statements made in connection with it. Whether the stylistic peculiarities designated by it are so exclusively, or even so peculiarly, the property of Italians as to be dubbed Italian by eminence, may, perhaps, be questioned. But there can be no question about the peculiarities themselves. They are unmistakable.

tive is not used, as by Lyly, to point an anthistesis but to give a quasi metrical jingle.

It is quite safe to assert that all the English poets of the 16th and early part of the 17th century, *i. e.*, from Wyatt and Surrey to and including Milton (in his youth, at least), were in this broad sense Italianists. The prose-writers are less easily summed up. Some of them escaped both Guevarism (Euphuism) and Italianism, while falling into other vices of style. But very many were either Guevarists (Euphuists) or Italianists. Among the latter a notable instance is Sidney.

In the latter part of Elizabeth's reign it became the fashion at court to parley Italianism. This was doubtless due in great measure to Sidney's *Arcadia*, published first in 1590, but well known for many years in manuscript. Italianism was a manner easily acquired by one apt in speech and fairly well read. And when once acquired was readily practiced.

The following table of dates (drawn up by Schwan) will make clear the evolution in England:

1534-1559—Appearance of Guevarism.

1553—Appearance of Italianism.

1568-1585—Growth of Guevarism.

1581—Sidney attacks both Guevarism and Italianism.

1585-1588—Culmination of Guevarism in Euphuism.

1589—Gabriel Harvey attacks Euphuism. Somewhat later Nash and Lodge also attack it.

1590—Italianism popular at court.

1589-1596—Decline of Euphuism; general spread of Italianism.

*Lyly and Euphuism.*—Euphuism has been characterized as Guevarism carried to its climax. It is now necessary to define this more particularly.

In 1578 appeared Lyly's memorable work, *Euphues*, the *Anatomy of Wit*. It was followed, 1580, by a continuation, *Euphues and his England*. The Greek term *Euphues* designated originally a man of fine physique, then a man of fine mental parts; still later—in the time of Isocrates—it was applied with a touch of sarcasm to a man who shone in con-

versation. Lyly named his hero Euphues probably because he wished to suggest a model young man of gentle birth and good breeding. Thus he reverts to the primary meaning. And he may have borrowed the word from Röger Ascham, rather than directly from the Greek.\*

Apart from similarity of style, there are many resemblances of matter between Lyly's book and Guevara's. In its contents Euphues, treating both poets as one book, is a mere imitation of North's translation of Guevara. Lyly contrasts the ancient Italy of Marcus Aurelius with the England of Elizabeth. The hero Euphues is a queer mixture of Guevara's philosophy, the courtier and lover of Lyly's times, and the scholar of an English university.

Euphues made a profound impression. This was due quite as much to the matter of the book, as to its manner. It is of course easy for us to ridicule the author's affectations. But underneath them all was a substratum of common sense that then had the charm of novelty, not to say originality.

In style Lyly far outstripped his master. He carries the device of antithesis to such a pitch that word balances word, phrase balances phrase, with the monotonous regularity of a pendulum. Not infrequently the balancing words contain exactly the same number of letters! He abounds in the rhetorical question. To Guevara's style he adds two features: *a*, play on words, often amounting to downright punning; *b*, alliteration. (A third peculiarity of Lyly, his so-called "unnatural natural history," is not in strictness a feature of style, but of subject matter. It will be treated subsequently.) As to play on words, Guevara himself, we have seen, indulges in it occasionally; but Lyly carries it to excess. As to alliteration, it is not to be found in Guevara for the reason that the Spanish language scarcely admits of it. We have

---

\* *Euphues* is he, that is apte by goodness of witte, and appliable by readines of will, to learning, having all other qualities of the minde and partes of the bodie, that must an other day serve learning, not trobled, mangled, and halfed, but sounde, whole, full, and hable to do their office, &c, &c.—*The Scholemaster*, pp. 38-39 (*Arber's Reprint*).

seen that Guevara occasionally marks his antithetic words by rhyme; instead of rhyme Lyly uses alliteration, and uses it also in excess. Lyly's alliteration, be it observed, differs in one respect very markedly from the alliteration in Anglo-Saxon and Early English poetry. This early poetic alliteration consisted in the repetition of the same initial sound at regular intervals in one and the same time, serving thereby to mark the verse-flow. Thus, from the paraphrase of Genesis, 8th century :

Satan ic thær secan wille, he is on thære sweartan helle ;  
which may be tolerably reproduced by

Satan I there seek will, he is on the swart hell.

As a sample of vowel alliteration, this from the Chronicle, Anno 938 :

Aethelstan cyning, eorla drihten.

Athelstan King, of earls the lord.

Modern English poets echo successfully such alliteration, *e. g.* :

They wept and wailed, but led the way.—*Tennyson*.

The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden.—*Byron*.

But in Lyly the alliteration is (usually, at least), transverse, instead of continuous, *e. g.* : "Although I have shrined thee in my heart for a trustie friend, I will shunne thee hereafter as a trothless foe." In order to get at the alliteration we have to dislocate the words shrine, shunne; heart, hereafter; trustie, trothless; friend, foe. We even get occasionally what might be called a *repeated* transverse alliteration, *e. g.*, "a sweet Panther with a devouring paunch, a sower poyson in a silver pottle."

The full effect of balancing may be seen in the following passage : "As you may suspect me of idleness in giving eare to your talke, so you may convince me of lightnesse in answering such toyes; certes, as you have made my eares glow at the rehearsal of your love, so have you galled my heart with the remembrance of your folly." 'Talk and toyes,

suspect and convince, eares and heart, not only balance, but they count up (nearly or quite) the same number of letters.

For a sample of the rhetorical question, in connection with balanced clauses, the following passage will suffice: "Dost thou thincke Euphues will deem thee constant to him, when thou hast been unconstant to his friend? Weenest thou that he will have no mistrust of thy faithfulness, when he hath had tryall of thy ficklenesse? Will he have no doubt of thine honour, when thou thy selfe callest thine honour in question?"

To illustrate climactic structure coupled with punning, we may examine this, from Lyly's petition to the Master of the Revels for pecuniary aid. He begs for: "Some land, some good fines, or forfeitures, that should fall by the just fall of those most false traitours, that seeing nothing will come by the Revels, I may prey upon the Rebels [*i. e.*, in Ireland]. Thirteen years your Highness' servant, but yet nothing. Twenty friends that, though they say they will be sure, I find sure to be slow. A thousand hopes, but all nothing; a hundred promises, but yet nothing. Thus casting up the inventory of my friends, hopes, promises, and times, the *summa totalis* amounting to just nothing. My last will is shorter than my invention; but three legacies, patience to my creditors, melancholy without measure to my friends, and beggary without shame to my family."

*Current Mistakes Concerning Euphuism.*—These are more numerous and more serious than one might suppose. And they are due either to inability to adhere rigorously to simple definitions and premisses, or to unfamiliarity with the general phenomena of literary history.

1. Prof. Minto, in his *Manual of English Prose*, persists in treating Lyly's "Unnatural Natural History" as an essential feature of Euphuism. In so doing he appears to forget that an author's style consists not so much in what he says as in how he says it. Now it is quite true that Lyly's writings abound in moral illustrations taken from animals, birds, plants, and stones that never existed or that never possessed

the properties ascribed to them, *e. g.*: "The bird Attagen, who never singeth any time after she is taken;" "The hart, being perced with the dart, runneth to the herb Dictannum and is healed;" "The precious gemme Draconites, that is ever taken out of the poisoned dragon;" "Anchusa [a root], though it be hardened with water, yet it is made soft with oyle," etc., etc. No naturalist ever saw the bird Attagen, or an herb Dictannum with such healing gifts, or a precious gem extracted from a dragon, or a root that hardens in water and softens in oil. Such phantasies are plentiful in Lyly. Yet modern critics have exaggerated their importance and misunderstood their origin. If extracted from the text of Euphues and printed all together, they would—to use Carlyle's phrase—"bulk large." On the other hand we are to bear in mind that Euphues is a rather large book. In Mr. Arber's Reprint it fills 478 pp. The pseudo-natural history in it would scarcely make fifteen per cent. of the whole. Whereas the author's peculiar sentence-structure pervades every page.

Furthermore Lyly is not in any sense the inventor of his impossible beasts, birds, plants, and stones. Every one of the four passages cited above has been traced to Pliny's Natural History. As for the marvelous herb Dictannum, the reader of Virgil will find it, *Æneid* xii., 412-415. Pliny may have borrowed from Virgil, Virgil probably from Aristotle. Marlowe, the great dramatist contemporary with Lyly, wrote in his *Edw. II.*, v., scene 1: "The forest deer, being struck, Runs to an herb that closeth up the wound." Jeremy Taylor, a generation or two later than Lyly, writes: "No creature among beasts, but being smitten, will fall upon the way to relieve itself, except a blind, incogitant sinner. . . The fishes in the fresh water, being struck with a tool of iron, will rub themselves upon the glutinous skin of the tench, to be cured. The hart, wounded with an arrow, runs to the herb dittany to bite it, that the shaft may fall out that stuck in his body. The swallow will seek out the green tetter-wort to recover the eyes of her young ones when they are blinded."

The history of popular belief in the marvels of nature is

an interesting subject, but is altogether too large for this place. It would demand a volume to itself. Enough to say here that it may be traced to the most ancient times, and all through the middle ages, and even to-day is not wholly extinct. As long as we speak of mermaids, or look upon the opal as an unlucky stone, or believe in curing hydrophobia with the mad-stone, we are treading in the footsteps of Pliny, Virgil, Marlowe, Lyly, and Taylor. In the age of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts not a writer is wholly free from such delusions. Even Bacon, with all his hard scepticism, could accept "the doctrine of appetites and passions and inclinations and dislikes and horrors in inorganic nature."

Of Lyly in particular we need only say that he cultivated such delusions more than his contemporaries and used them to excess to point a moral. But if we wish to see at a glance the difference between euphuistic *style* and non-euphuistic, we have but to contrast Lyly with Shakespeare at the point where both employ the same fable of natural history. Thus Lyly writes: "The fairer the stone is in the toade's head, the more pestilent the poison is in her bowelles." Shakespeare, in *As You Like It*, ii., sc. 1, makes the outlawed Duke exclaim:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

2. Another error concerning Euphuism is the belief that it was at one time the fashion at Elizabeth's court. This belief seems to rest chiefly upon the preface by Blount to his re-edition of Lyly's dramas, in 1632, in which he asserts: "That beautie in court which could not parley Euphuisme was as little regarded as shee which now there speakes not French." Lyly had then been dead a quarter of a century, his style out of vogue nearly half a century. Blount's assertion, therefore, has not the weight of contemporary evidence. Probably it was little more than a book-seller's puff. At all events it lacks corroboration. Furthermore antecedent probability is against any assumption that Euphuism, even in the milder



form of Guevarism, could ever have been popular anywhere, as a mode of conversation. For the simple reason that it is too difficult. To write, still more to talk, in the manner of Euphuus, would require an immense amount of practice and self-correction, yet these are precisely the questions in which Elizabeth's dames and cavaliers were sorely deficient. Euphuism is unmistakably the style of a pedant, not of a child of the world. Those who hold it to have been a court-fashion, confound it with Italianism.

3. Many Elizabethan writers have been taxed with Euphuism who are wholly free from it. Notably Sidney and Shakespeare. In Sidney, it is true, we occasionally find a sentence balanced somewhat after Lyly's fashion. But these are quite sporadic, and merely indicate that Sidney, like many a writer before and since the days of Lyly, was capable now and then of a rhetorical flourish. As for Shakespeare, there are in his plays scarcely a dozen sentences savoring in the least of Euphuism, *e. g.*: "Our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not, and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues."—*All's Well* i., sc. 1.

In one passage alone is Shakespeare out-and-out Euphuistic, and here he is directly parodying Lyly. In *Henry IV.*, Part 1, ii. sc. 4, Prince Hal and Falstaff are bantering each other with sham moral harangues. Of course Lyly's pedantic affectation is in thorough keeping with the situation. And the phrase in particular: "for though the Camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears," is evidently a burlesque of Lyly's phrase: "As the hearbe Camomile, the more it is trodden down the more it spreadeth abroad."

4. One of Shakespeare's early plays has been persistently misunderstood, *viz.*: *Love's Labour's Lost*. It has been characterized as a satire upon Euphuism, whereas in truth there is scarcely a trace of that mannerism in it. On the other hand the play is a palpable satire upon Italianism, then

high in favor at court.\* All the leading characters indulge in Italianism of the most recognizable type. We see it in the excessive use of the adjective "sweet"; "most divine;" in paradoxes like "This senior-junior giant dwarf Don Cupid"; strained figures, *e. g.*, the comparing of a beauty's eyes to "two pitch balls stuck in her face"; in such euphemisms as "in the posterior of the day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon." As one of the characters, Biron, admits, they deal in

"Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical."

In like manner one scene, at least, in *Hamlet*, act v., sc. 2, is a satire upon Italianism. It is the interview between Hamlet and Osric:

*Osric.* Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes, believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing; indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

*Hamlet* [ironically outdoing his interlocutor]. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory. . . . But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblance of him is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

---

\*In 1884 Mr. F. G. Fleay, who arrogates to himself a place in the front rank of Shakespearean scholars, published, *Anglia* vii., 223-231, an article upon Shakespeare and Puritanism, in which he evinced the grossest ignorance of the first principles of Euphuism, by pronouncing Armado to be a portrait of Lyly! In fact there is not an utterance of Armado's that has the faintest likeness to anything in Lyly's acknowledged writings. In all probability the hint for Armado was taken by Shakespeare from Fantastic Monarcho, a well known Italian, who died in London about 1580. The name Monarcho, indeed, occurs in the play, Act iv., Scene 1.

As satirist Shakespeare is, of course, not responsible for the style that he ridicules. But it must be admitted that the great dramatist, certainly in his earlier writings, could be an Italianist on his own account, *e. g.*, in the following outburst in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii., 2: "Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical! Dove-feathered raven, wolvisch ravening lamb"; or in *Lucrece*, where the despairing victim "wipes the brinish pearl from her bright eyes." *Venus and Adonis* is full of strained figures, *e. g.*:

"Once more the ruby-coloured portal opened,  
Which to his speech did honey-passage yield."

It is not surprising that Shakespeare's ardent imagination should go astray in an age when every extravagance was not only tolerated but encouraged.

Sidney, too, although professing to attack both Euphuism and Italianism, falls more than once into the snares of the latter. In truth, his *Arcadia* is plentifully interspersed with euphemisms and strained figures, *e. g.*: "About the time that the candles begun to inherit the sun's office"; or, the scattered lances "flew up in pieces, as if they would threaten heaven because they failed on earth"; or in this description of the wounded Parthenia, "her neck, a neck indeed of alabaster, displaying the wound which with most dainty blood laboured to draw his own beauties; so as here was a river of purest red, there an island of perfectest white, each giving lustre to the other, with the sweet countenance, God knows, full of an unaffected languishing."

After all, Sidney seems to have objected strenuously to only one form of Italianism, viz., the introduction of new-fangled words, or foreign words, or so-called ink-horn terms, or the misuse of legitimate English words. That is, he was a purist in his vocabulary. But his purism did not extend to his ideas and imagery.

Even Lyly himself slips occasionally into an Italianism, as in this paradox: "Now must I paint. . . a life posting to death, a death galloping from life, a wavering constancy, an unsettled resolution."—*Alex. and Campaspe*, iii., sc. 5.

*Subsequent History and Present Status of Euphuism and Italianism.\**—Euphuism as an acknowledged school of writing passed away before the close of the 16th century. Italianism lived much longer. We detect it in one or other of its Protean shapes all through the poetry of the 17th century, in the early poems of Milton, in Donne, Cowley, Crashawe, in the Heroic drama of Dryden and Davenant, so justly ridiculed in the Rehearsal. It got its quietus from the great satirical school, which Dryden himself founded and Pope perfected. We do not detect it again until the beginning of the 19th century, in the Romantic school. Coleridge, the leader of the school, indulges occasionally in an Italianism. So do Byron and Keats, possibly also Shelley. In our day Tennyson, in his youthful poems, and Swinburne. This is only natural. Italianism, be it observed once for all, is the play of the imaginative faculty either misdirected or uncontrolled. Each one of the poets just named is highly imaginative and therefore liable to err. Yet each one, being at the same time a great poet, has learned to bridle and chasten his imagination, as Shakespeare and Milton did. We need not hesitate to admit that Italianism is deep-rooted in the human spirit, and will always manifest itself sporadically in an imaginative era. Of course it will not re-assert itself as a school of writing. That was possible only in a nascent period, like the Elizabethan. English literature is now too mature, too conscious of its history, to permit such a repetition.

How is it with Euphuism? Again we may safely admit that although departed it can never become wholly extinct. It appeals, not indeed to man's imagination, but to his ingenuity. It will always strike an echo in every writer who pays more heed to the moulding of his sentences than to the elaboration of his thought and the adjustment of his thought to precise words. Thus Sir William Temple, Dryden (in his prose), Dr. Johnson, Macaulay evince more or less of a ten-

---

\*The following remarks are quite independent of anything in Landmann, Breyermann, Schwan, or the other investigators of Euphuism.

dency towards euphuistic structure. Temple, for instance, in his parallel between Homer and Virgil: "To the first must be allowed the most fertile invention, the richest vein, the most general knowledge, and the most lively expression; to the last, the noblest ideas, the justest institution, the wisest conduct, and the choicest elocution. . . . Homer had more fire and rapture, Virgil more light and swiftness; or at least the poetical fire was more raging in one but clearer in the other, which makes the first more amazing and the latter more agreeable, etc., etc." Dryden imitates both opinion and style of Temple, in the Preface to his *Fables*: "Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts and ornament of words; Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expression, which his language and the age in which he lived allowed him. Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined, etc." Johnson, the follower of Dryden, thus delivers his estimate of Dryden's style, thereby marking his own: "Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay, what is great is splendid. . . . Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete." Macaulay: "But a community which has heard the voice and experienced the pleasures of liberty, in which the merits of statesmen and of systems are freely canvassed, in which obedience is paid not to persons but to laws, in which magistrates are regarded not as the lords but as the servants of the people, in which the excitement of party is a necessity of life, in which political warfare is reduced to a system of tactics; such a community is not easily reduced to servitude."

Even Carlyle, in his younger days, could draw a parallel in the old-fashioned style: "Schiller seems to have the greater genius, Alfieri the more commanding character. . . . Schiller is magnificent in his expansion, Alfieri in his con-

densed energy ; the first inspires us with greater admiration, the last with greater awe."

Such a passage in Carlyle is all the more striking for its contrast with his later and characteristic style. In this later style he disregards utterly mere rhetorical arrangement of word and phrase, and concerns himself solely with the exactness of his thoughts and the precise choice of his words. Yet even in Chartism, which is pure Carlylese, we may note this: "He that will not work according to his faculty, let him perish according to his necessity." By merely changing "work" to "labour," we should get perfect parisonic balance.

Temple, Dryden, Johnson, Macaulay, Carlyle are assuredly not Euphuists. They do not, after the manner of Lyly, point their anaphora with alliteration. They do not play or toy with words. They do not balance nicely word with word, phrase with phrase for page after page throughout a whole chapter or a whole book. Their style is not all parallel or contrast. They use their rhetorical device in moderation. Yet they do use it, and it behooves us to recognize the tendency.

It also behooves us to profit conscientiously by the labours of scholars and hold fast by what they have established, not suffering ourselves to be led astray by slipshod writers who persist in labelling anything and everything "euphuistic" that they fail to understand or approve. Thus the Hon. Roden Noel, in his essay on Robert Buchanan's poetry, comments upon such as find fault with that poet: "What seems to be desiderated is this—that costermongers and street women should say very hard, harsh, and commonplace things, perhaps blasphemy, only in turgid, euphuistic English." Had the Hon. Roden Noel taken the least pains to look into Euphuism, he would have learned that the euphuistic style, be its faults what they may, is never turgid, but on the contrary is always trim, precise and to the point, and wholly compatible with plain every-day words; that the essence of Euphuism consists not in the favouring of long or so-called elegant words over short and plain ones, but in the arrangement of words in

parisonic balance. In short, the Hon. Roden Noel would never have confounded *euphuistic* with *euphemistic*.

---

One of the characters of modern fiction has attracted considerable attention because of its supposed resemblance to Lyly's Euphues, viz., Sir Percie Shafton, in Scott's *Monastery*. Scott informs his readers that Shafton is modelled after Euphues. But this does not tally with the facts as we now understand them, and Prof. Minto is quite right in his remark that the style of Shafton "is far from being a reproduction of Euphuism as it is in Lyly." But when he adds: "Perhaps the nearest prototype of Shafton is Sidney's caricature of a pedantic schoolmaster, Rhombus, in *The Lady of the May*," he himself is in error.\* Shafton is a mixture (scarcely a blending) of types. When he exclaims (ch. xx.): "Many will say that in thus indulging the right of a gentleman to the son of a clod-breaking peasant [viz., in accepting Halbert Glendenning's challenge], I derogate from my sphere, even as the blessed sun would derogate should he condescend to compare and match his golden beams with the twinkle of a pale, blinking, expiring, gross-fed taper," he is somewhat of an Italianist. Still more evident is the Italianism of the following passage (ch. xxvi.): "What cause hath moved the ruby current of life to rush back to the citadels of the heart, leaving pale those features in which it should have delighted to meander forever! Let me approach her . . . with this sovereign essence, distilled by the fair hands of the divine Urania, and powerful to recall fugitive life, even if it were trembling on the verge of departure." But when Shafton discourses thus (ch. xvi.): "Certes, reverend Sirs, I may well heave such a suspiration, who have, as it were, exchanged heaven for purgatory, leaving the lightsome sphere of the royal court of England for a remote nook in this inaccessible desert, quitting the tilt-yard, where I was ever ready among

---

\*Gray entitles the piece *The Lady of May*, and spells the name Rombus.

my compeers to splinter a lance, either for the love of honour or for the honour of love, in order to couch my knightly spear against base and pilfering besognios and marauders—exchanging the lighted halls, wherein I used nimbly to pace the swift coranto or to move with a loftier grace in the stately galliard, for this rugged and decayed dungeon of rusty-coloured stone,” it must be admitted that his syntax is euphuistic. Lastly, when he breaks out (ch. xiv.): “Ah, that I had with me my Anatomy of Wit, that all-to-be-unparalleled volume, that quintessence of human wit, that exquisitely-pleasant-to-read and inevitably-necessary-to-be-remembered manual of all that is worthy to be known, which indoctrines the rude in civility, the dull in intellectuality, the heavy in jocosity, the blunt in gentility, the vulgar in nobility, and all of them in that unutterable perfection of human utterance, that eloquence which no other eloquence is sufficient to praise, that art which, when we call it by its own name of Euphuism, we bestow on it its richest panegyric,” he is neither Italianist nor Euphuist, but a *tertium quid* that the present writer is unable to identify, but which is not Sidney’s Rombus.

How much did Scott know at first-hand of Lyly’s Euphuës? In the narrative, just after the passage last cited, Christie of the Clinthill is mentioned as having no idea that all these rich and splendid epithets were lavished upon “a small quarto volume.” The phrase suggests, without necessarily implying, that Scott had seen and examined or possibly owned a copy. This can be proved, of course, only by direct evidence from the library at Abbotsford. Yet in Scott’s day Euphuës was a *livre introuvable*. In the Introduction to the Monastery Scott discourses about Euphuism and the French *precieuses ridicules*, about Nym, Pistol, Don Armado, Holofernes, and Mercutio, in so bewildering a way that we cannot help judging that if he really possessed a copy of Lyly’s book, he failed to master its style. Nym is a pronounced “humour” of the Ben Jonson type, Pistol is half humour, Armado, Holofernes, and Mercutio are Italianists. As for the French *precieuses*, their absurdity consists more in their



sentimentality than in their language, and in their language more by reason of its grammatical pedantry than by reason of its phrase-structure.

Inasmuch as Sidney's *Lady of May* is quite out of reach of the ordinary reader, it has seemed to the present writer worth while to introduce here its action and quote a good deal of its phraseology. The reader will see at a glance that the piece, slight as it is, provokes not a little curiosity. The following resume is based upon the edition in *The Miscellaneous Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, by William Gray; Boston, Burnham; 1860, pp. 263-279.\* The piece was composed by Sidney for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, while she was the guest of Leicester at Wanstead House, 1578. The scene begins by representing her as walking with her retinue in Wanstead Garden. A country woman demands to be received in audience. She throws herself at the Queen's feet and narrates how her daughter is persecuted by two rival wooers and their respective friends. She begs the Queen to restore peace, and departs leaving in her hands a written supplication.† Thereupon is heard a confused noise; six shepherds on one side, six foresters on the other, pulling and hauling the *Lady of May*, who does not incline to either party. Rombus, the schoolmaster, trying to restore order with learned wisdom, gets several unlearned blows for his pains. But at sight of the Queen the fracas quickly stops. Lalus, an old shepherd, addressing the Queen, explains to her how the beauty of the young woman has upset, or as he puts it, "disannulled the brain-pans of two of our featiest young men." But, he adds, the schoolmaster can better "dis-

---

\*Gray designates the play as a Masque. Whether this designation is taken from Sidney himself, does not appear from Gray's method of editing. In any case it is a misnomer. The play has none of the characteristic features of the Masque, but is merely in general an Interlude.

† This supplication is in verse. Apparently it has no bearing whatever upon the affair of the daughter. One is tempted to regard it as a covert declaration of undying devotion on Leicester's part, couched in the usual extravagance of Elizabethan adulation.

nounce the whole foundation of the matter." Accordingly Rombus delivers himself to this effect :

"Now the thunder-thumping Jove transfund his dotes into your excellent formosity, which have, with your resplendent beams, thus segregated the enmity of these rural animals : I am, potentissima domina, a schoolmaster ; that is to say, a pedagogue, one not a little versed in the disciplinating of the juvenile fry, wherein to my laud, I use such geometrical proportion as neither wanted mansuetude nor correction : for so it is described

Parcare subjectos et debellire superbos.

Yet hath not the pulchritude of my virtues protected me from the contaminating hands of these plebeians ; for coming solummodo to have parted their sanguinolent fray, they yielded me no more reverence than if I had been some pecorius asinus. I, even I, that am, who am I ? Dixi, vertus sapiento satum est. But what said that Trojan Æneas when he sojourned in the surging sulks of the sandiferous seas ?

Haec olim memonasse juvebit.

Well, well, ad propositos reverteto ; the purity of the verity is that a certain pulchra puella profecto, elected and constituted by the integrated determination of all this topographical region as the sovereign lady of this dame Maia's month, hath been quodammodo hunted, as you would say : pursued by two, a brace, a couple, a cast of young men, to whom the crafty coward Cupid had inquam delivered his dire dolorous dart."

Here he is interrupted by the Lady, who bids to be off, for a tedious fool. At this Master Rombus ejaculates : "O tempori, O moribus ! in profession a child ; in dignity a woman ; in years a lady ; in cæteris a maid ; should thus turpify the reputation of my doctrine with the superscription of a fool ! O tempori, O moribus."

The Lady now addresses the Queen in the usual strain of fulsome flattery, professing her inability to decide between her suitors and begging the Queen to decide for her. In this speech we may note such a passage : "I like them both and love neither ; Espilus [the shepherd] is the richer, but Therion

[the forester] the livelier. . . Now the question is—whether the many deserts and many faults of Therion, or the very small deserts and no faults of Espilus be to be preferred.” This is ordinary rhetorical antithesis, it falls short of specific Euphuism.

The suitors, Therion and Espilus, then sing a few six-line stanzas, turn about, each in commendation of his own superior claims. The quality of the verse is that of the average of pre-Spencerian poetry. Noteworthy is the alliteration in the line :

Warm well thy wits, if thou wilt win her well.

When Espilus asserts :

More high than stars, more firm than flinty field,

Are all my thoughts, in which I live or die,

and Therion replies :

The highest note comes oft from basest mind,

As shallow brooks do yield the greatest sound,

the lines recall to the present writer some other Elizabethan passage that he is unable to locate definitely.

Pending the Queen's decision, Dorcas, a shepherd, and Rixus, a forester, quarrel over the merits of the singers. We may note the use of the word “harlotry” by Dorcas : “If the proud heart of the harlotry [*i. e.*, Lady of May] lie not down to thee [Espilus] now, the sheep's rot catch her,” in the sense of a foolish, pettish girl. Compare Glendower's speech : “She [my daughter] is desperate here ; a peevish, self-willed harlotry, one that no persuasion can do good upon.” I. Henry IV., iii., sc. 1 ; also Capulet's : “A peevish, self-willed harlotry it [Juliet] is.” Rom. and Jul., iv., sc. 2. The word in this sense is not given by Halliwell, Nares, Davies, nor has the present writer discovered it elsewhere in Elizabethan writings.

Rombus tries to restore due logical order with another outburst. “Heu ! Ehem ! Hei ! Insuperbum ! Insuperbum vulgorum et populorum ! Why, you brute nebulons, have you had my corpusculum so long among you, and cannot yet tell how to edify an argument ? Attend and throw your ears

to me, for I amgravidated with child till I have endoctdrinate your plumbeous cerebrosities. First, you must divisionate your point, quasi you should cut a cheese into two particles; for thus must I uniform my speech to your obtuse conception; for, prius dividendum oratio antequam definiendum; exemplum gratia, either Therion must conquer this dame Maia's nymph, or Espilus must overthrow her, and that secundum their dignity, which must also be sub-divisionated into three equal species, either according to the penetrancy of their singing, or the meliority of their functions, or lastly the supremacy of their merits. De singing satis. Nunc are you to argumentare of the qualifying of their estate first; and then, whether [sc. which of the two] hath more infernally, I mean deeply, deserved."

Dorcas, in a long speech, regrets that he was not sent to school in his youth, that he might the better understand Master Rombus. Yet he himself ends with a simile containing at least one term, "odible," as inkhorn-ish as any in Rombus: "Let him [who scorns the innocent lambs] be hated as much as a filthy fox, . . his sight more odible than a toad in one's porridge." When he boasts: "How many courtiers . . have I heard making their woful complaints; some, of their Mistress's estate, which dazzled their eyes and yet burned their hearts; some, of the extremity of her beauty mixed with extreme cruelty; some of her too much wit, which made all their loving labours folly," his syntax has a euphuistic squint.

Again Rombus interposes: "O tace, tace! or all the fat will be ignified; first, let me dilucidate the very intrinsical marrowbone of the matter. He [Dorcas] doth use a certain rhetorical invasion into the point, as if, indeed, he had conference with his lambs; but the truth is, he doth equitate you in the mean time, Master Rixus; for thus he saith, that the sheep are good, ergo, the shepherd is good, an enthymeme a loco contingentibus, as my finger and thumb are contingentes. Again, he saith, who liveth well is likewise good; but shepherds live well, ergo they are good; syllogism in Darius, King of Persia, a conjugatis; as you would say, a man coupled

to his wife, two bodies but one soul ; but do you but acquiescate to my exhortation and you shall extinguish him. Tell him his major is a knave, his minor is a fool, and his conclusion both. Et ecce homo blancatus quasi lilium."

Rixus puts in a fresh plea for the superiority of foresters, Rombus says a few (unimportant) words, and the Lady cuts them all short, beseeching the Queen to give her decision. It is given in favor of Espilus, "but what words, what reasons she used for it, this paper, which carrieth so base names, is not worthy to contain."\* Espilus sings a song, partly to express his own joy, partly to console his vanquished rival, and the Lady closes with some words of leave-taking.

Rombus's speeches have been given in full, that the reader may judge for himself. It is clear that he is neither a caricature of Euphues, nor the prototype of Shafton. All three characters, it is true, are pedants. But pedantry, we are to remember, may be of very different kinds. Some men are pedants in displaying their learning out of place or out of reasonable measure. Such pedants are Euphues and Shafton. Others are pedants in affecting the show of learning without the reality. Such an one is Rombus. He not only "murders Priscian" (a fault of which Lyly's characters would be incapable), but he uses his Greco-Latin coinages with a very feeble sense of their force. What does he mean, *e. g.*, by "transfund his dotes into your excellent formosity," or "segregated the enmity of these rural animals," or "the surging sulks of the sandiferous seas," or "uniform my speech to your obtuse conceptions," or "a certain rhetorical invasion into the point."

Whatever æsthetic value we may set upon the effusions of Euphues and Shafton, we can not withhold from them the

---

\*How are we to interpret this? In form it is, of course, a fresh bit of that arrant flattery that haunts Elizabethan literature. But is it also, in substance, a veiled allusion, and if so, to what? Various little turns in the piece suggest the inference that it might have been an attempt, by Sidney's 'prentice hand, to dramatize some incident of real life, that occurred in connection with or just before Elizabeth's visit at Wanstead. The present writer is not sufficiently conversant with the details of life at Elizabeth's court in 1578 to hazard a conjecture.

credit of at least talking coherent sense, whereas Rombus utters mere verbiage. Besides, Eupuhes and Shafton use their words correctly, we are never at a loss for the meaning; whereas Rombus is a blunderer, almost as bad as old Lalus, who coins the remarkable verb "disnounce" probably through a confusion of "announce" and "discourse." In short, Rombus belongs in the category with Lalus, Bottom, Dame Quigley, Mrs. Malaprop, and Mrs. Partington, but with certainly one important difference. Bottom and the others are naive blunderers, merely echoing words and phrases that they do not pretend to understand. Rombus really flatters himself that he does understand, hence his ire that any one "should turpify the reputation of his doctrine with the superscription of a fool." In Rombus Sidney is castigating the would-be learned blockheads of his times.







Cornell University Library  
PR 427.H32

Euphuism.



3 1924 013 258 417

018

